

to the Corps of Engineers, they will send you another \$10. That is much better than the odds in any of the multitude of sweepstakes we receive that say you may be a winner if you send it in, with odds of 100 billion to 1. Everybody gets the \$2, and everybody who sends the survey in gets the additional \$10. If they all answer, that is \$144,000 of the taxpayers' money.

Mr. President, both you and I are constantly on the backs of the corps to engage in constructive projects that really mean something for us. I am sure you have received the same reaction that I have, on a number of occasions, that "We just don't have enough money to do that. You are going to have to appropriate more." Here is \$144,000, plus the cost of the survey, designing it and totaling it up. That simply is a waste of money. Am I to believe that the Corps of Engineers is truly broke when it is littering mailboxes in my State with \$2 bills and promises of more? Last night, when I was discussing this with a friend, he laughed and said that he had recently gotten a survey from Lexus about luxury automobiles. In dealing with automobiles that cost more than \$35,000, Lexus promised that if you sent in the survey they would send you \$1. Luxury automobiles, \$1 per survey; the Corps of Engineers on removing dams, \$12 per survey. This is just not the way in which to spend taxpayer money. This is not going to increase confidence in the way that our Government spends our money.

This is such a totally outrageous use of the taxpayers' money that I cannot resist the temptation to make more than one set of remarks on the floor on the subject, so I can promise you, Mr. President, that I will be back next week to tell you what is in the survey. If you are shocked about free \$2 bills and free \$10 bills from your friendly neighborhood Corps of Engineers office, wait until you, as a Senator from Oregon, see the totally distorted way in which the corps seeks your views, completely stacked toward one set of answers to the questions rather than an objective survey. But that is for another time.

For this morning, the sole remark is: Here is this Government agency, constantly crying poverty to us when we have constructive activities for it to engage in, dropping \$2 bills in mailboxes across southeastern Washington, and maybe a part of Oregon, for all I know, and promising \$10 more for 5 minutes' worth of work in filling out a phony survey.

This is not the way we should be spending our taxpayers' money.

WIDESPREAD EDITORIAL SUPPORT FOR INCREASING THE H-1B CAP

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to draw the Senate's attention to several editorials from across the country that endorse an increase in the number of skilled professionals who are allowed in on H-1B visas.

The American Competitiveness Act, which I have introduced along with Senators HATCH, MCCAIN, DEWINE, SPECTER, GRAMS, and BROWNBACK, approaches the shortage of high-tech workers problem in both the short and long term. The bill will increase the annual number of H-1B visas that awarded to foreign-born professionals by approximately 25,000 this year, and will create 20,000 scholarships a year for U.S. students to study math, engineering, and computer science.

The cap of 65,000 on these visas will likely be reached in May, four months before the end of the fiscal year. This will cause considerable disruption at U.S. companies and universities. Without legislative action, this problem will worsen each year until companies will no longer be able to count on access to key personnel that help fuel growth.

If American companies cannot find home grown talent, and if they cannot bring talent to this country, a large number are likely to move key operations overseas, sending those and related jobs currently held by Americans with them. We do not want that to happen.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that these articles be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the materials was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

HIGH-TECH TALENT: DON'T BOLT THE GOLDEN DOOR

(By Howard Gleckman)

Perhaps she's named Irina—a brilliant computer engineer from Kiev. She wants to come to the U.S. and bring her dreams of developing the next breakthrough in communications software. But if she doesn't make it in the next few weeks, she probably will be turned away.

That's the sad result of bad immigration policy. In 1991, Congress set quotas that allow only 65,000 high-tech workers to enter the country annually. The cap was part of a larger scheme to stem the flow of immigrants, legal and illegal. But with American companies scrambling to find programmers, engineers, and other highly skilled workers in a tight labor market, business fears the 1998 quota could be filled by May.

ON THE CHEAP

The high-tech industry is working with Senator Spencer Abraham (R-Mich.) to raise the annual quota of these so-called H-1B visas to 90,000. But companies are getting a chilly response from the Clinton White House, which argues that U.S. employers are trying to get foreign workers on the cheap when they should be investing more money in educating and training the domestic workforce. "Companies shouldn't be able to say, 'We'll use immigration law as our way out,'" says White House economic policy coordinator Gene B. Sperling.

The debate over wages and education misses the main point: The U.S. shouldn't bar entry to skilled and creative people at all. At the same time, there's no question that U.S. businesses must support and generate efforts to raise the quality of math and science schooling to ensure a sufficient domestic crop of programmers and engineers in the future.

But such educational reform will take years. In the meantime, skilled immigrants

who want to work in the U.S. should be welcomed with open arms. Top-notch workers, no matter what their nationality, stimulate an economy, creating wealth and improving living standards overall.

Indeed, the high-tech revolution now helping to fuel U.S. economic expansion might not have been so powerful without the drive and creativity of gifted immigrants. Everyone knows about Andrew S. Grove, the Hungarian who co-founded chip-making giant Intel Corp. But there are hundreds of others. Two of Sun Microsystems Inc.'s founding quartet were foreigners. At Cypress Semiconductor Corp., four of 10 vice-presidents are immigrants—from Britain, Germany, the Philippines, and Cuba. Says Cypress CEO T.J. Rodgers: "What would [the U.S.] look like if the computer chip had been created in Europe because of our lousy immigration policy?"

Many immigrants arrive as students. Alan Gatherer, branch manager of wireless communications at Dallas-based Texas Instruments Inc., came from Scotland to study at Stanford University. Simon Fang, who now works on complex integrated circuits at TI, is originally from Taiwan. He also came to the U.S. to attend graduate school, and thanks to an H-1B visa, was able to stay.

WHIZ KIDS

The ivy path makes the current visa restrictions all the more perverse. Foreign students come to the U.S. to profit from the best graduate education in the world. Some take jobs here. But under H-1B visas, they must pack their bags six years later. Other countries get the benefit of these U.S.-trained engineers and scientists.

When these immigrants leave, the U.S. loses more than just their talents. An extraordinary number of their children achieve great success, too. Example: Of the 40 finalists in this year's prestigious Westinghouse Science Talent Search Award, 16 are either foreign-born or children of immigrants.

Critics say immigrants take jobs from native-born Americans. Maybe a few do. But artificial barriers won't protect U.S. jobs for long. If U.S.-based companies can't get the skilled workers they need at home, they will set up shop elsewhere—be it Dublin or Kiev. "We are disarming the economy of the United States if we don't allow skilled workers to come in," argues Dell computer Corp. CEO Michael S. Dell.

That's why it is essential for the U.S. to nurture the best workforce in the world. It shouldn't matter whether these top-notch employees are born in New York or New Delhi. America, a nation of immigrants, should never turn its back on people who want to come here to work. They have too much to offer.

[From the Detroit News, Feb. 21, 1998]

CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

Republican Sen. Spencer Abraham of Michigan is drafting a bill that would help neutralize what is perhaps the single biggest threat to America's economic boom: a shortage of high-tech workers. The bill, which will propose raising the 1990 cap on highly skilled temporary workers from abroad, deserves the support of all those who want to see continuing gains in American prosperity and standard of living.

The rapid pace of economic growth combined with record low unemployment have created a paradoxical situation: High-tech companies, the engine of much of the economic growth, cannot find enough skilled workers to sustain current growth levels. A study conducted by the Information Technology Association of America estimates that there are more than 346,000 unfilled positions for highly skilled workers in American companies.

Should his situation persist, the Indianapolis-based Hudson Institute, a prominent think tank, estimates that in just a few years it will cause a 5 percent drop in the growth rate of total economic activity, also known as gross domestic product. That means a whopping \$200 billion loss in national output—nearly \$1,000 for every American.

"It is as if America ran out of iron ore during the industrial revolution," one industry official notes.

The problem is particularly acute in Michigan, where high-tech needs are higher and the unemployment rate is lower than the national average. Indeed, so severe is the crunch of skilled workers here that many high-tech employers in Oakland County recently convened a conference to discuss ways of attracting more workers to the state.

Despite the burgeoning demand, the immigration ceiling for highly skilled immigrants has remained fixed at 65,000 for the past eight years. Indeed, for the first time in history, American employers last year reached this cap one month before the end of the fiscal year. This year they are expected to hit the limit even sooner.

Protectionists and nativists will no doubt denounce Sen. Abraham's bill as a threat to American workers. Many call for increased subsidies for "job training" programs. But such programs have seldom yielded the promised benefits.

The real threat to American workers is that companies will be forced to move abroad in search of talent.

[From the Seattle Times, Feb. 23, 1998]

END NATIVIST HIRING CAPS

For six years, Congress has mandated that the high-tech industry compete with one hand tied behind its back. It's time to loosen the cuffs.

The handicap comes in the form of an obscure immigration limit called the H-1B visa program. The product of a nativist backlash against highly skilled foreign workers, the law prevents software firms, tech companies and others from freely employing the best and brightest around the world. The 1990 provision set a national cap on visas for foreign professionals—including computer engineers, programmers, doctors and professors—of 65,000 a year. Demand has skyrocketed and the high-tech industry faces a critical labor shortage.

Supporters of the cap say imported workers are stealing jobs for native-born professionals. Nonsense. From its founding, this country's economic growth and intellectual achievements have been fueled by talented immigrants, not curtailed by them.

The domestic textile industry, space program, physical sciences, biotech and computer industry all gained from the contributions of immigrants—many of who become tax-paying American citizens, created thousands of new jobs for their fellow countrymen, and greatly increased the nation's stock of human capital. Just consider: A third of all American Nobel Prize winners were born overseas.

Twelve percent of the fastest-growing firms in the nation today were founded by immigrants. Andrew Grove, a Hungarian emigre, was the force behind Intel. Charles Wang, a Shanghai native, founded Computer Associates—a company employing thousands and generating millions of dollars each year. Eckhard Pfeiffer, CEO of powerhouse Compaq, is from Germany.

Microsoft relies on skilled immigrants for about 5 percent of its work force. At Seattle-based ZymoGenetics, two foreign recruits—one from India and one from Austria—collaborated on a new form of insulin that captured 45 percent of the world market and

catapulted the local biotech firm to success. The stories of immigration-inspired innovation and job creation in the Puget Sound region are endless.

Certainly, the federal government should support efforts to train (or retrain) a home-grown, high-tech work force. But the key lesson here is that immigration is not a zero-sum game. Labor produces more labor; there is no finite number of jobs in any industry.

Next week, Congress will hold hearings to re-examine the H-1B visa limits. Nativist demagogues will protest loudly. But erecting barriers to a small but invaluable stream of skilled immigrants hurts no one but ourselves.

If lawmakers ignore employers, don't be surprised if high-powered high-techs move jobs overseas or contract out to foreign firms. By curtailing through foolish hiring restrictions the flexibility and growth of some of the nation's most dynamic industries, "America First" demagogues are putting America last.

[From the Fairfax Journal, Mar. 10, 1998]

JOBS GO BEGGING

Those who calculate such things say that more than 19,000 high-tech jobs are going begging in Northern Virginia. The situation is bad enough that firms offer bounties to employees who lure in others with particular skills. Meanwhile, a Virginia Tech study done for the Information Technology Association of America suggests that more than 340,000 highly skilled positions are unfilled around the country—more than the population of Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax City and Falls Church combined.

Those numbers have spawned hurry-up efforts in Northern Virginia (Northern Virginia Community College and the Herndon-based Center for Innovative Technology are major players) and around the country to train more computer-savvy workers before American companies start to lose their competitive edge globally or the companies feel compelled to ship more work overseas.

But in addition to workforce training efforts, high-tech companies ought to be able to bring more of those foreign workers to our shores before they ship jobs elsewhere.

Bills introduced in Congress by Rep. Jim Moran, D-8th District, and Sen. Spencer Abraham, R-Michigan, would increase companies' access to foreign professionals. Abraham's bill, would increase the cap on "H-1-B" visas to 90,000 workers a year from 65,000. The H-1-B program allows companies to sponsor foreign professionals who generally get permission to stay for six years. In 1997 the 65,000 cap was reached in August and this year companies are expected to reach the cap in May—such is the demand.

Moran's bill, part of a package designed to train more high-tech workers, would allow the Secretary of Labor to grant permanent residency status to information technology professionals for three years without quotas, as is done now with nurses and physical therapists—as long as the efforts don't take away jobs or earnings from Americans. Indeed, the job vacancies suggest that no skilled worker, native-born or immigrant, is scrounging for work at the moment.

Moran's measure goes in the right direction, although anti-immigrant sentiment around the country is strong enough that he might have to resort to a cap of some sort as a political fallback. In any event, measures that open up American access to highly trained technology professionals deserve the support of the entire Northern Virginia delegation in Congress.

Allowing more foreign professionals into the U.S. makes all the sense in the world. It would help keep the economy humming in

technology hubs such as Northern Virginia, and it would give companies second thoughts about taking jobs overseas. Further, these workers are anything but budding welfare cases. They have to be paid the prevailing wage for their skills—and the wages are darn good.

High-tech firms say that easing the worker shortage is critical to maintaining growth and competitiveness. Increasing the number of Americans who receive high-tech training, and bringing in more foreign workers who can do the work, are two parts to improving the situation. There are enough jobs going begging to try both approaches.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I noted today that the President, speaking before his labor union leadership in Las Vegas, attacked the Republican budget and Members of the Republican Senate who voted for that budget, I being one, for underfunding his initiatives in education.

I believe that deserves a response because it is a duplicitous statement, to be kind. Let's talk about what has actually happened here. The President sent us a budget. It was a budget which was supposed to follow the agreements which we had reached last year under the 5-year budget agreement which reaches a balanced budget. But because new funds have been identified, according to the President, as a result of the tobacco settlement, he decided to change that.

Prior to sending us a budget, the President for days went out on the trail and proposed new program after new program after new program—140 I think is the number, \$140 billion worth of new programs. Some of that was money on top of old programs, but the majority of it was on new programs, and all of it was outside the original budget agreement, and so he has sent us his budget which proposes all this new programming.

Now, what did the members of the Republican Budget Committee do, and what did the Republican membership of this Senate do in passing the budget out of committee last night? We did two things. One, we said we reached an agreement last year so let's stick with that agreement. Let's continue to work towards balancing this budget. That happens to be a priority.

In that context, we funded child care initiatives, new child care initiatives to the tune of \$5 billion, bringing the total child care initiatives in this Congress being funded to somewhere in the vicinity of \$74 billion. At the same time, we funded an expansion in NIH research activities, over \$15 billion over the next 5 years, a huge expansion, a 40 percent increase in NIH funding.

We also said that if there is a tobacco settlement, the proper place to put that money is in the Medicare accounts. Why? Because as we have learned, Medicare is the most threatened major Government program that we have today. We know that Medicare